CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for operating a device having a keypad comprised of a plurality of keys, for inputting characters from a set of characters used for constructing words in a predetermined language, comprising:

mapping a first subset of the set of characters to at least one predetermined key;

mapping a second subset of the set of characters to the same one of said at least one predetermined key;

mapping a third subset of the set of characters to at least one other key; and

when activating said at least one predetermined key, automatically selecting for insertion into a character buffer a character from said first subset of the set of characters or from said second subset of the set of characters as a function of a content of the character buffer at a current insertion point into the character buffer.

2. A method as in claim 1, wherein the predetermined language is Hindi.

3. A method as in claim 1, wherein the predetermined language is based on one of a plurality of Indian scripts.

4. A method as in claim 2, wherein said first subset of the set of characters comprise independent vowels, wherein said second subset of the set of characters comprise dependent vowels.

5. A method as in claim 4, wherein said third subset of the set of characters comprise consonants.

6. A method as in claim 2, wherein mapping said first subset of the set of characters to at least one predetermined key comprises mapping independent vowels to a first plurality of numeric

keys, and wherein mapping said second subset of the set of characters to at least one predetermined key comprises mapping dependent vowels to the same first plurality of numeric keys.

7. A method as in claim 6, wherein mapping said third subset of the set of characters to at least one other numeric key comprises mapping consonants to a second plurality of numeric keys.

8. A method as in claim 6, where activating one of said first plurality of numeric keys selects one of an independent vowel or a dependent vowel depending on the character preceding the current character insertion point in the character buffer, wherein if the character preceding the current character insertion point is a consonant a dependent vowel is selected, otherwise an independent vowel is selected.

9. A method as in claim 8, wherein the dependent vowel is changed to an independent vowel by activating in sequence a context shift key and the key associated with a dependent vowel, whereby the independent vowel is selected without regard for the character that precedes the current insertion point in the character buffer.

10. A method as in claim 7, where a consonant cluster is created by activating in sequence a context shift key and one of said second plurality of keys.

11. A method as in claim 7, wherein a nukta consonant is created by entering a consonant, followed by selecting a nukta modifier.

12. A method as in claim 11, wherein the nukta modifier is selected by depressing a predetermined key to which are mapped a plurality of modifiers, including the nukta modifier.

13. A method as in claim 7, and further comprising entering other Hindi characters by activating a non-numeric key to open a special character window on a display, and selecting a desired Hindi character displayed in the special character window for input, where the special characters comprise anusvara, carabindu, visarga and nukta.

14. A method as in claim 7, where said first plurality of keys are numeric keys 2 and 3, and where said second plurality of keys are numeric keys 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

15. A method as in claim 14, wherein modifiers anusvara, carabindu, visarga and nukta, and virama, are mapped to numeric key 1.

16. A method as in claim 1, wherein said device comprises a mobile station.

17. A mobile station comprising a data processor coupled to a memory for executing a stored program and also coupled to a display and to a numeric keypad, said stored program comprising a Hindi character editor function responsive to activated keys on said numeric keypad for displaying and storing Hindi characters, where independent vowels are mapped to a first plurality of numeric keys, where dependent vowels are also mapped to said first plurality of numeric keys, and where consonants are mapped to a second plurality of numeric keys, said data processor being responsive to activating one of said first plurality of numeric keys for selecting and displaying one of an independent vowel or a dependent vowel depending on the character preceding a current character insertion point in an input character buffer, wherein if the character preceding the current character insertion point is a consonant a dependent vowel is selected, otherwise an independent vowel is selected.

18. A mobile station as in claim 17, wherein the dependent vowel is changed to an independent vowel by activating in sequence a context shift key and the numeric key associated with a dependent vowel, whereby the independent vowel is selected without regard for the character that precedes the current insertion point.

19. A mobile station as in claim 17, where a consonant cluster is created by activating in sequence a context shift key and a consonant.

20. A mobile station as in claim 17, wherein a nukta consonant is created by entering a consonant, followed by selecting a nukta modifier.

21. A mobile station as in claim 20, wherein the nukta modifier is selected by depressing a

predetermined key to which are mapped a plurality of modifiers, including the nukta modifier.

22. A mobile station as in claim 16, and further comprising entering other Hindi characters by activating a non-numeric key to open a special character window on said display, and selecting a desired Hindi character displayed in the special character window for input.

23. A mobile station as in claim 22, where the special characters comprise anusvara, carabindu, visarga and nukta.

24. A mobile station as in claim 17, where said first plurality of numeric keys are 2 and 3, and where said second plurality of numeric keys are 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

25. A mobile station as in claim 24, wherein modifiers anusvara, carabindu, visarga and nukta are mapped to numeric key 1.

26. A mobile station as in claim 18, where said first plurality of numeric keys whereon vowels are mapped comprise keys 2 and 3, where said second plurality of numeric keys whereon consonants are mapped comprise keys 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, where modifiers anusvara, carabindu, visarga and nukta are mapped to numeric key 1, where virama is also mapped to numeric key 1, and where said context switch key comprises *.